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Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

Annual reports of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to the Economic and Social Council

1. In its decision 2000/10 of 7 April 2000, the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) took note of the reports to the Economic and Social Council (DP/2000/11 and DP/FPA/2000/7). The Executive Board also decided to transmit the reports, together with the comments made on them, to the Council for consideration at its substantive session of 2000.

2. Section I of the present document contains the report of the Administrator of UNDP; section II contains the report of the Executive Director of UNFPA.

3. The comments of the Executive Board on the reports are contained in section III below, which is an extract from the report on the second regular session of the Executive Board.

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I. Report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

Contents

		Page
I.	Implementation of the reform programme of the Secretary-General and the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review	3
	A. Structures and mechanisms	3
	B. Funding and resources	4
	C. Resident coordinator system	5
	D. Implementation of the common country assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework	6
	E. Harmonization of programming periods and procedures	7
	F. Gender mainstreaming	8
	G. Gender balance	9
	H. Capacity-building	9
	I. Common premises and services	10
	J. Cooperation with the World Bank	11
	K. Monitoring and evaluation	12
II.	Follow-up to international conferences	13
III.	Follow-up to special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance: agreed conclusions	14
IV.	Recommendations	17

I. Implementation of the reform programme of the Secretary-General and the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review

A. Structures and mechanisms

1. During 1999, General Assembly resolution 53/192 served as the normative benchmark and road map for continued progress in implementing the reform programme of the Secretary-General (A/51/950 and Add.1-7) with respect to operational activities for development. As part of their own internal reform processes and the transition to results-based management, which require that they become increasingly results-oriented, the funds and programmes are already beginning to look ahead to the triennial policy review of 2001 as the next milestone at which progress vis-à-vis resolution 53/192 will be measured.

2. During 1999, the new structures and mechanisms emerging from the reform programme, namely the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and its subsidiary bodies — both formal and ad hoc — were further consolidated and utilized to produce concrete results and prepare decisions by the executive heads of the member entities of UNDG.

Problems encountered and lessons learned

3. The UNDG Executive Committee noted that the entire structure of subsidiary mechanisms and bodies of the UNDG had basically been inherited from the former Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) and needed to be thoroughly reviewed and rationalized. There was a clear perception among members of the UNDG that there were too many groups, which claimed staff time and resources, and that they were essentially standing groups without sunset clauses. Accordingly, the Executive Committee decided in the last quarter of 1999 to proceed with a thorough review of the subsidiary mechanisms of the UNDG with a view to rationalizing the number of subsidiary bodies and introducing sunset clauses in all sub-groups. All groups would come to an end on 31 December 1999 and would have to justify any continued activity in 2000. Where possible, standing groups would be replaced by ad hoc task-oriented meetings, which would end as soon as the tasks were accomplished.

4. During 1999, UNDG continued to address the two challenges that had been mentioned in the report to the Council submitted at the second regular session 1999 (DP/1999/10): (a) greater involvement of the United Nations system as a whole in the initiatives of the UNDG; and (b) greater involvement of resident coordinators and country teams in the development of those initiatives.

5. While progress has been made in these directions, more remains to be done. UNDG and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) machinery, particularly the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), operate under different working methods and periodicity. UNDG operates practically in real time with monthly meetings of principals — the decision makers — and twice-monthly meetings of the UNDG Support Group, which prepares for the decision making by principals. The sub-groups also meet frequently and their outputs are analysed by the UNDG Support Group before decision items are placed before the principals' meetings.

6. CCPOQ, however, which brings together senior policy and programme staff from the United Nations system as a whole, meets only twice a year, with two additional inter-sessional meetings of the CCPOQ resident coordinator working group. The creation of the CCPOQ web site and the use of electronic mail by its highly efficient secretariat have sought to ensure that UNDG initiatives with system-wide implications, which are systematically shared with CCPOQ by the Development Group Office (DGO), are immediately distributed to all United Nations system organizations. However, in 2000, further ways need to be devised to obtain more rapid feedback from the broader system.

7. One step in addressing this issue was taken by the World Health Organization (WHO), which was formally accepted as a member of the UNDG and takes part periodically at the executive head level in relevant meetings of the Executive Committee of the UNDG. Another step was taken by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in seconding to the DGO a senior staff member, who has been assigned key substantive responsibilities, for example for the common country assessment/United Nations Development Assistance Framework

(CCA/UNDAF) learning network, and ensures UNIDO involvement in UNDG initiatives at an early stage.

8. Another step that could be taken is to rationalize further the subsidiary machinery of UNDG and CCPOQ. One positive example of how this could be done is the abolition in 1999 of the CCPOQ Working Group on Operational Activities Training, whose tasks could be taken over by the UNDG Sub-Group on Training. Similarly, in 2000, UNDG will need to address further the policy of its member entities regarding partnerships with the private sector and civil society, areas in which CCPOQ has done extensive work. UNDG needs to build on that work rather than duplicate it and may be able to rely on the ad hoc working groups of CCPOQ that have worked on those subjects.

9. Regarding greater involvement by the resident coordinator in UNDG initiatives, one experience that could serve as an example for future directions is the handling of the Swedish and Swiss grants. The Governments of Sweden and Switzerland are providing specific grants to support the United Nations reform initiative at the country level through the resident coordinator system. The contributions follow an earlier, successful reform initiative funded by Sweden, involving the Guatemala and Zimbabwe country teams, and are intended to:

(a) Strengthen the capacity of the United Nations country team to carry out the United Nations reform initiatives at the country level;

(b) Expand opportunities for the United Nations system at the country level to achieve the objectives of the United Nations reform;

(c) Improve connectivity in the field;

(d) Build upon the experiences of country teams and enhance the learning processes within the United Nations system.

10. Rather than providing centrally decided norms on the use of these resources, UNDG instead invited resident coordinators, with the country teams, to submit substantive proposals, which would make a difference for system-wide effectiveness at the country level.

11. Proposals were received from 67 countries, out of which 17 proposals have been selected by an inter-agency advisory group for support through the Swedish Government contribution. Another three to four proposals will be supported through the recent contribution from the Swiss Government.

Recommendations

12. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the problems encountered and lessons learned in enhancing the structures and mechanisms for United Nations reform and inter-agency coordination;

(b) Welcome the ongoing efforts by the UNDG to rationalize the architecture of its subsidiary machinery;

(c) Encourage the members of the UNDG and of CCPOQ to seek further ways to rationalize the work of their subsidiary machinery;

(d) Invite agencies of the broader United Nations system to seek a closer association in real time with the work of the UNDG;

(e) Reaffirm the need for continued, close cooperation between UNDG members and the subsidiary machinery of ACC, especially the CCPOQ system, as well as the need for the ongoing review of ACC to address the issue of linkages between ACC and the UNDG and the other United Nations Executive Committees.

B. Funding and resources

13. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/59 of 24 July 1997, as well as Executive Board decisions 98/23, 99/1 and 99/23, in 1999 UNDP made further progress in implementing the multi-year funding framework (MYFF), which integrates programme objectives, resources, budget and outcomes with the goal of increasing core resources and enhancing their predictability. The Executive Board legislation calls on UNDP to ensure the full participation of programme countries in the elaboration, monitoring and reporting of strategic results frameworks (SRFs), and to arrive at proposals for consideration at the annual session 2000 for reviewing and updating the MYFF. Finally, as called for by Board decision 99/24, the Administrator of UNDP as well as the Executive Director of UNFPA regularly bring to the attention of the Secretary-

General the importance of and specific opportunities for his advocacy with Member States to increase contributions to the funds and programmes. The Secretary-General has indeed used several opportunities of high-level contacts with contributor countries to highlight the imperative of increased core contributions to the funds and programmes.

Problems encountered and lessons learned

14. UNDP held its first annual funding meeting during the second regular session of the Executive Board in April 1999. Although the MYFF would be complete for Board consideration only at the third regular session of the Board in September 1999, the outcome of the first-ever funding meeting was encouraging. For the first time since 1992, 11 major donors announced an increase in their core contributions in local currency terms. In addition, a total of 21 contributing countries announced pledges for 2000 and 2001. Programme countries demonstrated a deep commitment to the funding meeting, where there was considerable high-level participation from capitals of both donor and programme countries. In terms of enhanced predictability, while a number of countries announced payment schedules at the funding meeting, in some cases actual payments of the core contributions were received much later and, in a few cases, not before year-end. In this context, it is important that all contributing countries officially communicate their 2000 core contributions as early in the year as possible and that they adhere to the fixed payment schedules that they announce. In addition to the funding commitments, the meeting highlighted the need for UNDP to reduce its overdependence on a limited number of donors. In comparison, the traditional pledging conference held in November 1999 yielded modest results, where none of the major donors were in a position to pledge, *inter alia*, because of the timing of their budget cycles. With the establishment of funding meetings within the respective Executive Boards of the funds and programmes, there is a clear need for the intergovernmental bodies to reconsider the role of the pledging conference held each November.

Recommendations

15. The Council may wish to:

(a) Welcome the progress achieved by UNDP as well as its sister funds and programmes in introducing the MYFF;

(b) Encourage the funds and programmes to exchange experiences and lessons learned in the area of MYFFs with a view to submitting, as requested by the legislation, proposals for reviewing, updating and improving the MYFF by the time of the annual session 2000;

(c) Express concern about the continued decline in core funding to UNDP and the other funds and programmes and, in this context, strongly urge all Member States to support the implementation of the MYFF, *inter alia*, through increased core contributions in order to meet the regular (core) resources targets set in the MYFF, as well as specifically urge all countries to increase their core contributions to help to reduce the overdependence on a limited number of donors;

(d) Make recommendations on the future of the United Nations pledging conference, taking into account the experience gained at the funding meeting at the second regular session of the Executive Board, as well as the experience of the other funds and programmes.

C. Resident coordinator system

16. As the primary mechanism for country-level inter-agency coordination, strengthening the resident coordinator system continued to be a top priority for UNDG in 1999. Among achievements to date have been (a) new selection procedures for resident coordinators including independent competency assessment; (b) resident coordinator appraisal and reporting guidelines have been modified based on experience over the last two years to emphasize collective work planning and self-assessment by the resident coordinators and the United Nations country teams; (c) the pool of candidates for selection is being widened with emphasis on increasing the number of women; (d) a faster and streamlined process of nomination, selection, and clearance of resident coordinators is being implemented; and (e) training support for the resident coordinator system is being enhanced.

17. An important working tool introduced in 1999 was the Resident Coordinator Network (RC-Net), the web site maintained by the DGO to support the resident coordinator system, by providing in one convenient place all the legislation, inter-agency guidance notes, reports, hyperlinks to country-level resident

coordinator system web sites and other information. It is expected that this tool will greatly promote the use of available information and knowledge and the exchange of experiences.

18. Among other actions of support to the resident coordinator system, the strengthening of the United Nations Staff College in Turin by the UNDG with a post of special adviser, the induction course for first-time resident coordinators, providing inter-agency and thematic training to resident coordinators, and the review of the resident coordinator annual report by inter-agency groups are important new mechanisms developed to ensure that the United Nations system can participate in the resident coordinator system in practical ways.

Problems encountered and lessons learned

19. While considerable progress has been made in the resident coordinator system, there are significant outstanding challenges to be met. First, the issue of achieving gender balance of resident coordinators is a persistent problem not amenable to easy solutions, particularly given the high attrition rate of women resident coordinators, resulting in part from the strong demand and competition among agencies for competent women managers. UNDG is currently seeking to implement a series of measures, including increased recruitment from outside the United Nations system, with the requirement that identified candidates undergo a competency assessment exercise.

20. Secondly, it is important that agencies of the United Nations system as a whole participate more actively in and make more serious use of the resident coordinator performance appraisal exercise, which after two years of implementation suffers from a low response rate from the system as a whole. The appraisal mechanism when fully used by all agencies serves as a powerful tool for assessing on-the-job competency of incumbent and former resident coordinators and can be used as a source of information for future placement of candidates for resident coordinator positions. It is recognized that formal appraisal systems have limitations and depend on the frankness as well as the fairness of the reporting. Some agencies believe the system, as currently constituted, does not encourage frankness and would prefer more informal arrangements that emphasize learning and self-improvement.

Recommendations

21. The Council may wish to:

(a) Welcome the progress achieved so far in strengthening the resident coordinator system, particularly the increased sense of ownership of the system by funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system;

(b) Take note of efforts under way to improve the gender balance of resident coordinators and invite agencies of the United Nations system to make further efforts to increase their nominations of qualified women candidates for resident coordinator vacancies;

(c) Invite agencies of the United Nations system to participate more fully in the resident coordinator appraisal system;

(d) Take note of the efforts under way regarding self-assessment of the country team as a whole, based on the work-planning exercise connected with preparation of the annual report of the resident coordinator system.

D. Implementation of the common country assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework

22. During 1999, UNDP continued to serve as the Vice-Chair of the UNDG Sub-Group on Programme Policy, furthering the CCA/UNDAF process. Significant progress has been achieved in the implementation of the CCA and UNDAF with: (a) the finalized guidelines issued; (b) the issuance by ACC of a guidance note on CCA/UNDAF, endorsing the guidelines and committing the ACC member organizations to support country teams; (c) the wide distribution of the CCA and UNDAF guidelines on CD-ROM to take advantage of information technology as a dynamic tool in development work; (d) the implementation of a series of one-day workshops with the United Nations partners at their respective headquarters to stimulate a participatory approach and ownership of the resident coordinator system; (e) the promotion of system-wide learning and sharing of good practices among country teams through the learning network; and (f) the definition of the main parameters for monitoring and evaluation in the light of the requirements set by the General Assembly and based on the results-based approach.

23. By the end of 1999, country teams in 113 programme countries were directly involved in the CCA exercise. With 40 completed CCAs, 53 ongoing and 20 planned, some 80 per cent of countries are expected to have a CCA before the end of the year 2000. Acceptance by Governments has been high, with the active involvement of officials in almost all countries. The CCA is rapidly gaining favour as the single essential database for all United Nations system partners, with considerable interest shown by bilateral agencies. The broader implementation of the UNDAF, referred to as the worldwide roll-out, has now extended to 21 countries (i.e., with the harmonized programming period starting in 2001), with another 46 expected by the end of 2000 (i.e., with the harmonized programming period starting in 2002).

Problems encountered and lessons learned

24. While the progress with the implementation of the CCA/UNDAF has been rapid and encouraging, there are clearly areas of process and content where matters can be improved and further developed. The CCA/UNDAF experience to date in six countries is being reviewed and is expected to provide lessons learned and best practices that could be fed back into the preparation and implementation of future UNDAFs, particularly through the RC-Net web site maintained by the DGO and the CCA/UNDAF learning network. A virtual workshop is planned for 2000 to examine the actual CCA/UNDAF experience in some six countries, with the full participation of the country teams.

25. Preliminary issues to address as well as lessons learned are as follows: (a) clearly, the CCAs and UNDAFs of the roll-out phase will need to strive for a higher and consistent level of quality, building on the pilot experience; (b) there is a risk — which countries in the roll-out phase will need to address — of the CCAs' and UNDAFs' focusing exclusively on social sectors and social development, leaving out the broader macroeconomic and sectoral considerations; (c) the involvement of non-resident agencies has been limited and special efforts will need to be made during the roll-out to involve them in the UNDAF, particularly the regional commissions and small technical entities and agencies; and (d) as mentioned in the discussion of gender mainstreaming, future CCAs and UNDAFs will need to address gender issues more thoroughly and avoid treating women as a special vulnerable group.

26. It is too soon to assess from the new exercises being carried out in the roll-out countries the extent of application of the lessons learned from the pilot phase that were translated into guidelines. While monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are being established, parallel efforts are also ongoing to improve the support to country teams for CCA/UNDAF, in particular through learning initiatives, the identification and sharing of good practices, as well as systematic and consistent information sharing and networking.

Recommendations

27. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the progress on implementation of the CCA/UNDAF process, encourage the feedback of lessons learned into future CCA/UNDAFs of the roll-out phase and urge funds and programmes to continue to review their programming processes, with a view to streamlining and simplification so as to reduce the administrative and financial costs to the Government as well as to the United Nations system;

(b) Reaffirm the lead role of Governments and urge all United Nations system partners to participate actively in the CCA/UNDAF process;

(c) Urge that there be as much complementarity as possible between the UNDAF and other strategic instruments, such as the country assistance strategy, the comprehensive development framework (CDF) as well as the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP).

E. Harmonization of programming periods and procedures

28. Harmonization of programming periods of the funds and programmes is being accelerated in order to allow for greater synergies among the operational activities at the country level. Currently, some 98 per cent of all countries, where applicable, have plans for harmonization, to be completed by 2004.

Problems encountered and lessons learned

29. The harmonization of programming periods has received a boost from the UNDAF roll-out, which provides an added incentive to achieve harmonized programming periods and simplify programming procedures. Since ultimately the value of any exercise such as harmonization is the benefit to programme

countries in terms of more effective programmes and to the United Nations system in terms of more effective use of their limited resources for operational activities, it would be very important in the context of preparations for the triennial comprehensive policy review to assess the benefit to funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system of harmonized programming periods as well as of simplified procedures.

30. Regarding the simplification and harmonization of programming procedures in general, in 1999, UNDG consulted a sample of resident coordinators regarding specific areas where procedures could be simplified, and the following areas were identified and are under review by UNDG: (a) varying country programme frameworks and formats and approval processes for programmes and projects; (b) the stages of monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects (i.e. annual, tripartite, and mid-term reviews) should be realigned in compliance with the harmonization of programming periods; (c) lack of uniformity in the operational procedures for project implementation (e.g., conditions of service for national consultants, procurement and transfer of titles of equipment and closing of projects); (d) varying financial reporting requirements by agencies; (e) different information technology approaches for databases of United Nations activities; (f) lack of common premises guidelines; (g) need for consistent procedures on national execution; and (h) parallel and duplicated security operations, not conducted in cooperation with the United Nations Security Coordinator and the Designated Official system.

Recommendations

31. The Council may wish to:

(a) Welcome the progress achieved by UNDG members so far in harmonizing their programming periods;

(b) Request the funds and programmes as part of their preparations for the triennial policy review of 2001 to assess the actual benefits to programme countries of harmonized programming periods;

(c) Encourage the members of the UNDG, in the light of the discussions on this subject at the Council, to address the areas for further simplification and harmonization of procedures, identified in consultation with resident coordinators and country teams, and to report back to the Council at its next substantive session with concrete results in each area.

F. Gender mainstreaming

32. UNDP and its partners in the UNDG, have stressed, through the work of the Sub-Group on Gender, the importance of the UNDAF as a tool for promoting gender mainstreaming in operational activities for development. Potentially, UNDAFs can provide a real empowerment framework for women through operational activities as envisaged in the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995.

Problems encountered and lessons learned

33. While potentially the CCA and UNDAF provide the opportunity to reinforce and support the mainstreaming of gender, and the current guidelines on the CCA and UNDAF call for mainstreaming gender considerations, the Sub-Group on Gender has found that most of the UNDAF documents it has reviewed indicate the intention to mainstream gender in the documents themselves and in the programmes of the funds and programmes. The disaggregation by sex of all indicators in the CCA indicator framework is an example of what has been done to support gender mainstreaming. However, there is scant evidence that such mainstreaming has in fact occurred. Furthermore, in the UNDAF documents, women were usually described as a disenfranchised group, often likened to disadvantaged minority groups. In future, CCAs and UNDAFs will need to recognize the active social, economic and political roles played by women rather than depicting them only as a target group in need of assistance.

Recommendations

34. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the problems and lessons learned in mainstreaming gender in operational activities for development, particularly through the UNDAF;

(b) Encourage the funds and programmes and other United Nations system partners engaged in the CCA and UNDAF to ensure that gender considerations are fully reflected not only in the intentions of the UNDAF but also in its implementation.

G. Gender balance

Problems encountered and lessons learned

35. The question of retaining women at the mid-career level continues to be a challenge faced by UNDP. A variety of causes have led to the departure of women at this level, many related to work/life and family issues. UNDP is addressing this challenge through a new work/life policy and a human resources policy that actively promotes the careers of young women, including such measures as cumulative seniority in all previous professional grades as grounds for promotion.

36. As of November 1999, the percentage of women in the Professional category and above in UNDP was as follows: 36 per cent of all professional staff; 25 per cent of UNDP resident representatives and resident coordinators; 21 per cent of all staff at the D-1 and D-2 levels and 3 out of 7 staff at the Assistant Secretary-General level.

37. UNDP targets for percentage of women staff are: 40 per cent overall for staff at the Professional and Director levels and 38 per cent for resident coordinators/resident representatives by 2002.

Recommendations

38. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the lessons learned by UNDP in the implementation of its gender balance policy, in particular in regard to the departure of women in mid-career;

(b) Call for further efforts to accelerate achievement of the institutional goals, taking into account the lessons learned by other United Nations entities.

H. Capacity-building

39. UNDP currently uses the term capacity development, which is defined as the central process of long-term development. Capacity development involves the acquisition of ability by an institution, organizational group or individual to perform a function or group of functions in a regular, efficient, effective and sustainable manner. UNDP has been advocating for a number of years a comprehensive or systems approach to capacity development, which sees institutions not in isolation, but as part of a broader policy and institutional environment. UNDP seeks to take into account that broader environment, which can determine the success or failure of operational activities for development, even where technical cooperation is effective at the level of outputs.

Problems encountered and lessons learned

40. As in many areas of operational activities, it is important for all agencies and entities of the system to share a common understanding and approach to capacity-building so that closer operational collaboration to meet national demands becomes a reality. There are various terms and approaches to capacity-building used across the system. Accordingly, through inter-agency consultations, particularly through CCPOQ, which held a workshop on the subject in July 1999, UNDP has taken an active part in developing the system-wide common denominator on capacity-building and has contributed to that process the systems approach described above to capacity development as well as its experience in four decades of operational activities. The preliminary results of the workshop were shared with the Council in 1999 as a conference room paper. However, CCPOQ is still faced with the task of converting these preliminary results into a guidance note for the resident coordinator system to facilitate collaborative inter-agency initiatives on capacity-building within the context of the UNDAF and the individual programmes of United Nations entities.

41. The ultimate challenge is to make capacity-building, following a common comprehensive system-wide approach, an integral part of all CCAs and UNDAFs as well as of the individual country programmes and cooperation frameworks of United Nations system funds, programmes and agencies. While capacity-building is an integral concern of the CCA/UNDAF learning network under the UNDG, the primary responsibility for capacity-building rests with national Governments. For their part, resident coordinators and their country teams will need to ensure that capacity-building in the future is fully built into the initial design of operational activities for development, using a comprehensive systems approach that takes into account the entire policy and institutional environment around the development initiative.

42. With regard to strengthening internal capacity, and in particular that of United Nations country teams, UNDG recognizes the key role that sharing information and knowledge can have. As the Secretary-General highlighted in his 1997 programme for reform, "only the United Nations has expertise across virtually the entire range of development concerns" (A/51/950, para. 10).

43. A number of individual agency efforts are under way to strengthen information and knowledge management within the United Nations. For its part, in June 1999, UNDG approved DevLink, a UNDG-owned and -managed web site that will provide a space to share information and harness knowledge on UNDG-related issues, including such substantive areas as poverty eradication and girls' education. As such, DevLink aims to contribute to improving the capacity and knowledge of UNDG staff at headquarters and the country level.

Recommendations

44. The Council may wish to:

(a) Recall that the primary responsibility for capacity-building rests with programme countries themselves;

(b) Take note of and strongly encourage the ongoing inter-agency efforts to arrive at a comprehensive understanding and approach to capacity-building as well as corresponding guidelines for the resident coordinator system, to be followed up by the sharing of case studies and evaluations of capacity-building initiatives;

(c) Urge the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies to promote learning and knowledge creation in the area of capacity-building through increased evaluations of capacity-building programmes and projects, and further use of existing networks such as the CCA/UNDAF learning network to share experiences;

(d) Strongly encourage Member States as well as the funds, programmes and agencies to ensure that a comprehensive approach to the national capacity-building process, as agreed at the inter-agency level through CCPOQ, is followed in CCAs and UNDAFs as well as in country programmes of individual funds and programmes.

I. Common premises and services

45. UNDP has chaired the UNDG Sub-Group on Common Premises and Services since mid-1999 and is an active member of the Management Group on Premises and Services, which, as a decision-making body, relies on the advice and recommendations of the Sub-Group on Common Premises and Services.

46. In the course of 1999, the Sub-Group undertook eight evaluation missions to assess the potential for creating new and cost-effective United Nations Houses. As a result of the work of the Sub-Group, in cooperation with resident coordinators and their country teams, United Nations Houses have been established in Belgium, Belize, Latvia, Pakistan, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine; two more, in Ecuador and Trinidad and Tobago, are to be designated shortly.

47. The total number of United Nations houses established as of November 1999 is 36; the total was 30 at the end of 1998. It is expected that 10 more will be designated each year.

48. At their September 1999 Executive Board sessions, UNDP and UNFPA and the World Food Programme (WFP) received approval for capital reserves to facilitate the ongoing process of establishing a unified United Nations presence at the country level through development of United Nations Houses and common services arrangements. UNICEF had made provision for capital reserves for this purpose much earlier.

49. With the support of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, a system-wide common services survey was launched in February 1999. An in-depth analysis of the data received from the country offices is currently under way. Upon review of the information, a workshop will be held for operations managers of participating agencies. In late January 2000, such a workshop is planned in order to develop a set of preliminary guidelines to provide support for country offices in the establishment and management of common services arrangements.

Problems encountered and lessons learned

50. Progress on common services still lags behind that on common premises and the United Nations House, which have received a strong boost from the approval of additional capital reserves for UNDP, UNFPA and WFP. Additionally, the area of virtual common premises through information technology and connectivity needs to be further explored and exploited, particularly at a time when a major substantive theme of the Council is information technology and development.

51. The most feasible United Nations House projects have now been carried out and considerable up-front, one-time costs may be required for future premises. In countries with large programmes, identifying suitable accommodations can be difficult; space requirements strictly limit the number of properties available and decrease leverage in negotiations. There are significant risks involved with build-to-suit construction projects on land provided by the Government. It is preferable for Governments to make available rent-free premises in existing buildings.

Recommendations

52. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the approach adopted by the UNDG to common premises and services, encourage further progress, particularly on common services, and reaffirm the requirements for shared management, transparency, accountability and cost-effectiveness;

(b) Call on the funds and programmes to make additional efforts to establish common premises, especially virtual common premises, fully connected in real time through information technology, particularly country-based intranets.

J. Cooperation with the World Bank

53. During 1999, UNDP further developed its relationship with the World Bank at two levels: (a) the inter-agency level, as part of the UNDG discussions with the World Bank and (b) the bilateral level, with its direct policy and operational collaboration with the World Bank. This section focuses on the inter-agency relationship, which addresses the coordination concerns emerging from past legislation of the Council related to the overall links between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

54. One major issue in the collaboration between the World Bank and the United Nations through the UNDG was linkages between the comprehensive development framework (CDF) and the CCA/UNDAF. Another important area where collaboration between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions is essential is the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSP). In the context of the expanded heavily indebted poor countries initiative, these are new poverty-focused government instruments that are to be prepared with the assistance of the World Bank and IMF and would replace the former policy framework paper. The Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) of IMF is another area for collaboration. Much of the ongoing and future discussions with the World Bank and IMF will revolve around the links between these three instruments and facilities: the CCA/UNDAF, the CDF, the PRSP and the PRGF.

Problems encountered and lessons learned

55. The Administrator of UNDP, as Chair of the UNDG, has sent a guidance note on the CDF to field offices, and it is the subject of consultations between the United Nations and the World Bank, as well as between the Bank and ACC. The UNDG has established a United Nations system-World Bank Learning Group on the CDF, focusing on country-level experiences and involving system-wide participation.

56. Ongoing discussions between the UNDG and the World Bank, including briefings by World Bank senior staff, have helped to clarify some of the earlier questions regarding the relationship between the CCA/UNDAF and the CDF. The CCA, for example, should provide a common development situation analysis for both CDF and UNDAF, as well as other programming frameworks. As new instruments, the PRSP and the PRGF are still being developed and refined and the Bretton Woods institutions maintain an active dialogue with United Nations entities on these instruments. Some issues that have emerged in this dialogue include the following:

(a) Both CCA/UNDAF and the CDF call for extensive use of partnerships between the Government, the World Bank, the United Nations, civil society and other actors;

(b) While the UNDAF has a United Nations system focus, the CCA is a broader tool, which by its nature can be useful to many donors, including the Bretton Woods institutions;

(c) Implicitly, the PRSP covers the country's entire policy on the social sector, particularly policies directly relevant to poverty reduction, which is also the focus of UNDAFs; therefore the policies contained in the PRSP would also impact on the design and implementation of the UNDAFs;

(d) The UNDG members, through their operational activities, assist programme countries in developing many policies related to different aspects of poverty reduction, policy work that could be drawn upon by the Bretton Woods institutions as they assist countries to prepare the PRSPs.

Recommendations

57. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of and encourage the ongoing dialogue of UNDG members with the Bretton Woods institutions regarding the CCA/UNDAF, the CDF, the PRSP and the PRGF in order to establish linkages between these instruments, fully recognizing the distinct legislative parameters of the respective institutions and instruments, so as to address the above-mentioned and other emerging issues, and to report back to the Council at its substantive session 2001, especially in the context of the preparations for the triennial policy review;

(b) Recognize that the CCA constitutes a valuable analytical tool around which to plan and organize system-wide activities related to poverty eradication, which is now recognized as the overriding goal for operational activities for development;

(c) Invite the Bretton Woods institutions to collaborate further with the United Nations in the CCA and UNDAF exercises and to use the CCA itself as well as other United Nations instruments as a basis for formulating the CDF and the PRSPs so as to avoid duplication of effort and additional burdens on national counterparts in terms of data collection and situation analysis.

K. Monitoring and evaluation

58. In 1999, UNDP was involved in three major areas in this field: (a) implementing results-based management through the MYFF and its corresponding legislation; (b) the development of a new methodology for impact evaluation; and (c) the creation of a network of evaluation personnel within and outside UNDP called EVALNET. UNDP continued to chair the Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation (IAWGE), a network of evaluation services of the United Nations system, which last met in December 1999, to discuss, among other matters, results-based management, a new methodology for impact evaluation and the network of evaluators, EVALNET and monitoring and evaluation in the UNDAF context.

59. UNDP has been developing a new methodology for country-level impact assessment, a rigorous technique that assesses the impact of operational activities using three sources of information: (a) perceptions of stakeholders and clients; (b) documentation; and (c) validation, through follow-up interviews of people familiar with the programme or project. The methodology thus provides for cross-checks on information obtained from any single source.

60. With regard to national capacity-building in evaluation, in 1999, the Government of China and UNDP organized in Beijing a workshop on evaluation capacity development in the Asia and Pacific region, with the involvement of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee Working Party on Evaluation and the World Bank, which provided a useful opportunity for learning and exchange of experiences within the region.

Problems encountered and lessons learned

61. The experience of UNDP with impact evaluation so far reveals that: (a) evaluation impact is difficult because the organization has tended to offer assistance in areas that do not have clear-cut material products, such as policy formulation, or which are not time-bound, such as capacity-building; (b) the evaluation of government policies and their impact are extremely subjective, even in developed countries using large statistical surveys and abundant baseline data; (c) country-level impact assessments will be able to document how policy advocacy is translated into changes in the broad economic and social policy environment but it could be difficult to use country-

level impact assessments to evaluate the next step in the causal chain: how the new policy environment translates into improved welfare for the country. There is, therefore, an urgent need for better programme design and development in line with the principles of results-based management. The methodology and experience with country-level impact assessments will be presented to the Executive Board at an informal panel in 2000. The methodology is being piloted in three countries and five will be added in 2000.

62. The lessons learned so far by UNDP from the experience of other institutions regarding results-based management, which UNDP will take into account in the implementation of the MYFF, are as follows:

(a) The organization needs to set clear objectives for results-based management itself: should results-based management be a reporting and classification system (results measurement) or should results-based management be a strategic planning and management tool that can help to improve organizational performance (results management)?

(b) Any system must fit UNDP's specific needs and culture. As an approach, results-based management requires that the culture and specific nature of the organization be carefully taken into account. In particular, the unique mandate and decentralized structure of UNDP requires flexibility at the country level;

(c) Implementing results-based management is a learning process. Results-based management depends on many aspects of organizational culture, policy and operational practice. Any system needs to be seen as a work in progress, evolving over a considerable period of time and incorporating flexibility to make changes as experiences are gained;

(d) It is essential to keep the approach simple. Results-based management should not lead to an increased workload. The number of instruments must be limited and easy to understand.

Recommendations

63. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of and encourage the further development and refinement of the country-level impact assessment, taking into account the experience and feedback from the United Nations system as a whole as well as of other stakeholders, including Governments of programme countries, major donors and non-governmental actors;

(b) Encourage the work of the IAWGE with a view to developing a common understanding and methodology for impact evaluation in time for the next triennial comprehensive policy review, in particular for CCA/UNDAF; to promoting the further exchange of information and experiences with results-based management; and to furthering the accessibility of the respective evaluation databases of the different agencies;

(c) Take note of and encourage the further development of EVALNET, while sharing experiences and learning from the United Nations system and other development partners;

(d) Encourage all funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system to assist programme countries in strengthening national capacity for monitoring and evaluation, recognizing the primary responsibility of national Governments in this area.

II. Follow-up to international conferences

64. The focus in this section is on the integrated and coordinated follow-up to the United Nations conferences, in line with such Council legislation as resolution 1998/44.

Problems encountered and lessons learned

65. As the major conferences themselves and a number of five-year reviews have taken place and there is a large body of legislation and inter-agency decisions and guidelines, particularly from ACC and its machinery, the focus of conference follow-up has rightly shifted to the country level and the activities of national Governments and the resident coordinator system. It is important to bear constantly in mind that the primary responsibility for conference follow-up lies with Governments, while the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system provide assistance and support to Governments in their conference follow-up undertakings.

66. There is still a disconnect between the conference outcomes and attendant legislation, on the one hand, and the objectives of actual development assistance programmes, on the other. It is important that further

efforts are made to close this gap and ensure that the sum total of conference outcomes serve as objectives for aid programmes, fully recognizing that national Governments have the primary responsibility for setting the objectives of development programmes at the country level. With its neutrality and universality, the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system are well placed to work with the Governments of programme countries to facilitate the bridging of this gap. Member States should be encouraged as much as possible as they assess existing development programmes and design future ones, to address, from a national perspective, the outcomes of the conferences.

67. In addition to the national reports of Governments on the follow-up to individual conferences, the resident coordinator's annual report, prepared in close collaboration with the entire country team, is now an important source of information on actual inter-agency activities related to conference follow-up at the country level. The annual report has now been modified to give special emphasis to and provide more information on the integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences.

68. A review in May 1999 by the DGO of the resident coordinator reports for 1998, reveals the following regarding conference follow-up: (a) a large number of annual reports did address both the integrated and coordinated follow-up to major United Nations conferences; (b) others reported only on the follow-up to individual conferences; (c) others reported only on operational activities related to both follow-up to individual conferences and integrated follow-up; (d) some country teams that prepared special reports on conference follow-up made strategic plans for future support for conference follow-up; (e) more such strategic planning is required; (f) only 24 out of the 130 reports received made specific mention of the ACC materials on follow-up to global conferences, indicating that the documentation of the Basic Social Services Task Force of ACC was particularly useful and that the material on poverty had helped the country team to gain a better understanding of where each agency can bring its expertise to bear in support of poverty eradication; (g) resident coordinators suggested that the ACC materials needed to be supplemented with operational tools and specific advice in applying them, including methodological frameworks and models for their country-specific application; (h) a total of some 600 theme groups have been established for the cross-cutting or thematic follow-up to conferences, according to such themes as poverty eradication, gender, HIV/AIDS, food security, and others.

69. UNDG has developed new tools such as the CCA indicator framework, the girls' education strategy and the poverty action strategy that will give an impetus to the United Nations country teams on the follow-up to international conferences.

Recommendations

70. The Council may wish to:

(a) Note the progress of the resident coordinator system in assisting governments in the integrated and coordinated follow-up to global conferences and encourage further work by country-level theme groups to address the three areas highlighted by the Council in its resolution 1998/44: poverty eradication, social development and the 20/20 initiative and the role of civil society in conference follow-up;

(b) Re-emphasize the need to link follow-up to individual conferences, including the five-year reviews, to the integrated follow-up to all conferences, calling for review documents and other preparatory activities fully to reflect linkages with other conferences and call upon Governments, in their leadership of the follow-up to individual conferences, to ensure the cross-cutting dimension and linkages with the other conferences, with the full involvement of all stakeholders including the bilateral donors, the Bretton Woods institutions and civil society.

III. Follow-up to special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance: agreed conclusions

71. The agreed conclusions of the humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive sessions of 1998 and 1999 as well as General Assembly resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998 (paras. 38-40) provide a strong legislative basis for the interaction of operational activities and humanitarian assistance.

72. The Secretary-General has observed that in the second half of 1999, more conflicts were ending than

new ones beginning. This, combined with countries sliding back into crisis, has meant that an increased number of countries find themselves in the transition phase. Such countries are most in need of development assistance and are precisely where the United Nations system needs to take up the challenge of development and of meeting global goals: promoting development is the best long-term protection against crisis. In following up on the agreed conclusions of the humanitarian affairs segment of the Council from 1998 and 1999, UNDP and its partners in the United Nations Secretariat have sought to ensure a coherent approach to relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. As chair of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group on Post-Conflict Reintegration, a body whose explicit task is to seek practical solutions for a smooth transition from relief to development, UNDP has played a particularly active role in this regard. UNDP has also taken part in other efforts to ensure coherent approaches to fragile, transitional situations, for example, the development of the generic guidelines for the strategic framework approach, stressing in particular the development aspects. The UNDG is also promoting linkages between the UNDAF and the consolidated appeal process through joint meetings with the other executive committees, especially the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs. Current UNDAF guidelines do address the linkages between relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. A number of the countries where the UNDAF is being rolled out in 1999 and 2000 are countries in special situations.

Problems encountered and lessons learned

73. Two major — but not new — problems have had an impact on UNDP action in this area. First, while UNDP has allocated 5 per cent of its core resources to countries in crisis, where bridging the gap is an essential condition for effective work, it is more and more difficult, if not impossible, to move forward in the current context of declining funding levels for development, and chronic underfunding for crucial reintegration activities. Secondly, the crucial issue of ensuring a coherent approach to relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development and ensuring increased coordination between actors at the stage of preparedness as well as at the stage of response to crisis, as underlined in the agreed conclusions of the humanitarian segment of the Council in 1999, requires much more attention by all stakeholders than it has received in the past.

74. The crises of Kosovo and East Timor in 1999, in particular, have demonstrated to UNDP and other UNDG members, as well as the entire international community, the difficulties of linking development to relief, rehabilitation, and recovery. The following lessons from those experiences have already been drawn by UNDP and the other members of the UNDG Executive Committee:

(a) United Nations development entities failed to put forward a workable, common agenda on post-conflict recovery, with the result that these entities have been marginalized in the planning process;

(b) The developmental perspective is largely absent from United Nations approaches to transition. Although individual UNDG members have been participating in the work of the IASC, which is considering strategic coordination instruments for countries in special situations, the essential developmental perspective has not emerged sufficiently in the proceedings of the Group. Moreover, a development perspective needs to be part of the Security Council briefings on transition countries. Similarly, such a development perspective needs to be fully taken into account by all parts of the United Nations Secretariat;

(c) A more comprehensive approach to relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, as well as in enhancing disaster preparedness and local capacities for disaster response, is essential;

(d) The tendency towards a competitive promotion of coordination frameworks must be overcome: the transition phase is relevant for both the consolidated appeals process (CAP) and the UNDAF and neither should be seen as excluding the other;

(e) The early dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions as well as with other international key players on transition planning is crucial, particularly as the World Bank and other actors are extremely active in many post-conflict situations, for example, in Kosovo and East Timor.

75. Essential steps are being taken to address and to incorporate all these lessons at the level of UNDP, and the UNDG and its Executive Committee and through other coordination mechanisms.

76. At the level of UNDP, the issue of performance in special development situations must move more prominently onto the corporate agenda. In this connection, as part of its business plan, UNDP will seek to reconfigure the human and financial resources dedicated to this area, by empowering the Emergency Response Division (ERD) to support and strengthen regional bureau and country office capabilities. The UNDP Executive Team will assume a more active role in the oversight of UNDP activities in a select number of key crisis situations; in these countries, corporate policy will be jointly designed by the regional bureau concerned and ERD with regular feedback to the Executive Team. ERD will function as a secretariat inside UNDP to ensure an effective and coordinated approach by all services in UNDP, and to lead the effort to mainstreaming skills in crisis and post-conflict activities throughout the operational and policy units of the organization.

77. At the level of the UNDG and its Executive Committee, at the meeting held on 7 December 1999, which was attended by the Deputy Secretary-General for the discussion on this item on linking relief and development, given the implications of the item for other parts of the United Nations Secretariat and the other Executive Committees, it was proposed that the UNDG should be consulted by other parts of the United Nations on all development aspects of crisis situations through the UNDG chair. At the country level, the resident coordinator would also be appropriately instructed and involved regarding development aspects of crisis situations.

78. Furthermore, the IASC and IASC Reference Group, chaired by UNDP, whose membership extends beyond the traditional IASC membership to include the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the World Bank (now fully an IASC member), UNDG, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Study the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children and other actors, particularly from civil society, have made additional efforts towards a comprehensive approach to crisis and post-crisis countries, as called for by the Council. In particular, the IASC and IASC Reference Group have focused on bridging the gap between relief and development and to advocate for political and financial support, something that is unfortunately lacking in many situations, as the critical underfunding of the 1999 consolidated appeals demonstrates.

79. Strategic and technical areas and issues for coordination have been identified such as the standardization of information technology, dialogue with NGOs involved in both relief and development, the situation of internally displaced people, gender and humanitarian response, post-conflict rehabilitation, improving the CAP by joint assessments and by analysing the relationship between the CAP and the UNDAF, a new approach to the mid-term review, a greater commitment by actors at the country level, which implies increased administrative and managerial flexibility at the field level, and improved financial tracking.

80. The IASC Reference Group is also working on missions to review coordination and funding in selected post-conflict countries: Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and Somalia. The objective of the missions is to identify innovative, creative and practical solutions to key problems associated with post-conflict transitions, in particular relating to reintegration and rehabilitation. The terms of reference of these missions, which are currently being finalized, are the results of extensive consultations which have sought to involve fully all United Nations country teams in countries in special situation.

Recommendations

81. The Council may wish to provide guidance along the following lines:

(a) Take note of the ongoing efforts within the United Nations Secretariat to achieve a closer integration of relief, reconstruction, rehabilitation and development and to encourage further progress in line with recommendations of the agreed conclusions of the humanitarian affairs segment;

(b) Recognize the CCA as the building block for both the CAP and the UNDAF; invite the Security Council and call on the United Nations Secretariat, in analysing approaches to transition, to include a development perspective in order to eradicate the root causes of the crisis and to promote human development;

(c) Encourage UNDP to develop further its strategic partnership with the Brookings Initiative, which examines the relief-development gap, with a view to providing a bridge to other mechanisms such as the IASC and the OECD/DAC working party;

(d) Encourage UNDP and other UNDG members to develop further their dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions especially to ensure that adjustment processes are peace- and poor-friendly, as well as with other international key actors in the framework of other mechanisms and forums, such as the IASC, in order to ensure a more coherent and coordinated approach to relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

IV. Recommendations

82. The Executive Board may wish to:

(a) Take note of the present report;

(b) Decide to transmit it to the Economic and Social Council, together with the comments and guidance provided by delegations at the present session.

II. Report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund

Contents

		Page
I.	Introduction	19
II.	Implementation of the reform programme of the Secretary-General and the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review	19
	A. Structures and mechanisms	19
	B. Funding and resources	20
	C. Resident Coordinator system	21
	D. Implementation of the common country assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)	22
	E. Harmonization of programmes and procedures	23
	F. Gender mainstreaming	24
	G. Gender balance within UNFPA	25
	H. Capacity-building	25
	I. Common premises and services	26
	J. Cooperation with the World Bank	27
	K. Monitoring and evaluation	28
III.	Follow-up to international conferences	29
	A. UNFPA and the five-year review and appraisal of the International Conference on Population and Development	29
	B. System-wide collaboration and other United Nations conference reviews	30
IV.	Humanitarian and disaster relief assistance	32

I. Introduction

1. The year 1999 was a special one for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The five-year review process for the International Conference on Population and Development was successfully completed, culminating in July 1999 in the adoption by the General Assembly of the key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, as contained in the annex to Assembly resolution S-21/2 of 2 July 1999. The review addressed a wide range of issues covered by the triennial policy review, including, among other things, the need to enhance the complementarity and impact of the work of the United Nations development system. Strengths and constraints were identified, and lessons were learned for further strengthening the implementation of the Conference. The five-year review also provided an opportunity to strengthen the vital partnerships both within and outside the United Nations system that have been instrumental in implementing the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.[1] Indeed, partnerships and collaborations were the subject of a separate section of the annex to the resolution containing the key actions (section V).

2. Following closely on the five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development, cooperation among the partners of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) further thrived in the context of the reviews of other United Nations conferences. UNFPA has considered these reviews as opportunities to reflect on how the United Nations system can, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, assist countries in achieving the goals of the action plans of these conferences in a collaborative manner. With this end in mind, in its own follow-up to the key actions of the five-year review, UNFPA convened an ad hoc inter-agency meeting of the Task Force on Basic Social Services for All in September 1999. The aim was to consider collaborative mechanisms to operationalize key actions and to reach new benchmarks identified by the International Conference on Population and Development review process, as well as to examine how the Task Force could address joint issues in all the upcoming five-year conference reviews.

II. Implementation of the reform programme of the Secretary-General and the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review

A. Structures and mechanisms

3. The Secretary-General's proposals for reform mandated by Member States have provided the context in which the operational activities for development of the United Nations system are being strengthened. This has been further reinforced by the directives from the General Assembly through its resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

4. The UNDG has pursued a number of mechanisms, some of which are discussed in detail later in the present report, to enhance collaboration and improve coordination of operational activities at the country level. UNFPA has continued to work very closely with the UNDG in all of its activities, and has contributed in every way it can to optimizing the impact of the actions of the United Nations system — sometimes quite disproportionate in relation to its small size and limited human resources — at the country level. As a result, UNFPA is poised to contribute to the impact evaluation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) as called for in paragraph 63 of resolution 53/192.

5. In its follow-up to the triennial policy review and to the key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fund is committed to bringing, within its area of work, a strategic focus to its efforts in addressing the outcomes of all United Nations conferences. This is consistent with paragraphs 5 and 6 of General Assembly resolution 53/192 and with paragraph 89 of the annex to Assembly resolution S-21/2 on key actions, which states that all relevant bodies and entities of the United Nations system should continue to clarify, within existing mechanisms, their specific leadership roles and responsibilities and continue to strengthen their efforts to promote system-wide coordination and collaboration, especially at the country level.

Paragraph 89 further states that the inter-agency coordination role of UNFPA in the field of population and reproductive health should be reinforced. With this in mind, UNFPA organized an inter-agency meeting of the Task Force on Basic Social Services for All at the conclusion of the five-year review process for the International Conference on Population and Development so as to identify the roles of all the respective partners in the follow-up to the review.

6. The membership of the UNDG has expanded from the initial four organizations to include such other organizations as the World Health Organization (WHO). Issues that are of interest to the United Nations system as a whole, such as the Resident Coordinator system, are dealt with by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) in which UNFPA plays an active role. After initially undertaking a large number of initiatives and establishing several working groups, the UNDG has rationalized its work to encompass much fewer and more focused mechanisms.

Problems and lessons learned

7. Although efforts are ongoing among the UNDG partners to increase collaboration in the areas addressed in the triennial policy review, such efforts have to be further enhanced to be more consistent with the levels of cooperation and collaboration that are more clearly visible at the country level. Moreover, mechanisms to promote greater involvement of field representatives in the activities at headquarters must be further streamlined, and there must be further exchange and a constant flow of information among all partners on good practices and new developments.

8. In recognition of the fact that field representatives are responsible for implementing mechanisms and procedures developed by the UNDG, greater monitoring and follow-up are required to ensure sustained compliance. Mechanisms that tend to burden organizations, especially small ones such as UNFPA, need to be identified and streamlined. Efforts are already under way to reduce the number of groups working on various issues, as, for example, in the case of the UNDG Sub-group on Training, which has taken the lead on training issues, allowing for the discontinuation of a Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) working group that had a similar mandate. Other similar efforts at streamlining have been undertaken within the UNDG and need to be kept under review.

Recommendations

9. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the progress achieved in the implementation of the recommendations of the triennial policy review;

(b) Encourage the steady flow of information to Member States on these activities;

(c) Encourage the steady flow of information among all partners of the United Nations development system on implementation of the triennial policy review and take note of the new mechanisms agreed upon within the UNDG for this purpose;

(d) Reaffirm the importance of undertaking evaluations of the impact of programmes and of development frameworks and other mechanisms.

B. Funding and resources

10. The year 1999 presented a new and unique set of challenges for UNFPA in the area of resource mobilization. Despite numerous fund-raising efforts during the year, contributions to UNFPA general resources decreased to $250 million, 10 per cent less than in 1998 and approximately $40 million less than in 1997. Two of the most important factors for this have been the continuing unfavourable exchange rate of many currencies vis-à-vis the United States dollar, and the absence of a contribution from of one of UNFPA's major donors.

11. The financial prospects for 2000 look a bit better, with the return of one major donor and indications of increased contributions from several others. It is hoped that this will offset the significant reduction in contribution that has been announced by a major donor. UNFPA also expects to add to its supplementary resources, which increased by some 6 per cent in 1999 to about $34 million, although administering such resources is extremely labour-intensive and time-consuming. Moreover, with official development assistance (ODA) shrinking from $60.8 billion in 1992 to $51.8 billion in 1998 and with the resulting intense competition for funding, UNFPA is doubling its efforts to create more meaningful alliances with bilateral agencies, the development banks, private foundations,

the European Union (EU) and non-governmental organizations, among others. The Fund is also trying to find ways of broadening its donor base while at the same time exploring all avenues for meeting programme country needs.

12. UNFPA will be submitting its first Multi-Year Funding Framework (MYFF) to the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board at its second regular session in 2000. The MYFF, which was developed in close consultation with the Board, is a coherent framework that builds on clearly defined organizational results and a set of indicators to track progress towards achieving those results. The development of the MYFF has provided UNFPA with an opportunity to accelerate the shift towards a results-based approach that was already in motion. A clear definition of organizational priorities, greater emphasis on organizational effectiveness, and an improved tracking of and reporting on the Fund's performance will contribute to a more accurate determination of resource requirements and utilization and, it is hoped, encourage a more predictable and stable funding system.

13. As UNFPA moves forward, it will continue to focus its fund-raising efforts on restoring stability to its general resources and securing a modest increase in income in 2000. The planned approach is to identify those donors with the potential to provide and/or increase their contributions to UNFPA. It is hoped that the momentum of the five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development will help to generate additional resources for the Fund.

Problems and lessons learned

14. The reduction in core resources in 1999 adversely affected UNFPA's programmes, constraining the Fund's ability to maximize programme results. UNFPA programmes had to be drastically reduced by some $72 million, and this has cut into the results that could have been produced in programmes that had been previously approved by the Executive Board. The reduction in resources could not have come at a worse time: 81 new UNFPA country programmes have been approved by the Board since the International Conference on Population and Development and, as was shown by the five-year review process, momentum has been building in every region of the world to step up the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Moreover, because of the strong momentum in the Fund's programme delivery, provisional estimates indicate that UNFPA programme expenditures were very high in 1999. This reflected the fact that most programmes were in mid-cycle and had reached their peak implementation phase. As a result, UNFPA may have to draw down from its operational reserve to cover the overexpenditure, which would be replenished from 2000 resources.

Recommendations

15. The Council may wish to:

(a) Note the progress achieved in the development of the MYFF within the UNFPA and the opportunity this has provided UNFPA to accelerate the shift towards a results-based approach;

(b) Emphasize the role of Governments in making funds available for the country programmes they approve;

(c) Reiterate the special roles of the members of the Council and the Executive Boards in this regard;

(d) Make appropriate recommendations on the future of the United Nations pledging conference;

(e) Reiterate the call contained in paragraph 95 of the key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, for donor countries to take the necessary steps to reverse the current decline in overall ODA and to strive to fulfil the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for overall ODA as soon as possible;

(f) Encourage all donors to re-examine their ODA priorities with a view to increasing the relatively small proportion of their ODA that is currently allocated for population activities and for UNFPA.

C. Resident Coordinator system

16. UNFPA is represented on four bodies that have oversight of the Resident Coordinator system. These are the UNDG Sub-group on Resident Coordinator Issues, the Inter-Agency Panel for the Selection of Resident Coordinators, the Inter-Agency Steering Committee on Resident Coordinator Competency Assessment and the UNDG Sub-group on Training. Each of these groups continued its activities throughout

1999. The focus of all efforts was the continued fine-tuning of the Resident Coordinator selection process, particularly since that process was opened up to candidates from all agencies and funds following the introduction of competency assessment for all Resident Coordinator aspirants (in December 1998). Experience has shown that in 1999 the new system was functioning well, and was a vast improvement over what had preceded it.

17. UNFPA shares the concerns of all its partners in the Resident Coordinator system regarding such issues as security of the United Nations staff, among others, and it is participating actively in UNDG efforts to identify ways to protect staff. The Fund has also responded enthusiastically to other staff issues such as inter-agency staff mobility aimed at deepening the process of collaboration at headquarters.

Problems and lessons learned

18. UNFPA has been a full and active member of the Resident Coordinator system under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, participating in the various field committees, theme groups and working groups at the country level. This has been particularly challenging to UNFPA country offices, which, at one fourth to one tenth the size of some of its UNDG counterparts, find it difficult at times to participate in the increasing number of group activities of the Resident Coordinator system.

19. The process of identifying candidates for the pool of Resident Coordinators through the competency assessment exercise has been a useful tool, but it needs further fine-tuning. While UNFPA agrees that the costs of such assessment may be on the high side, the Fund has cooperated fully in the exercise on the assumption that the process could help strengthen the capabilities of staff. Nevertheless, UNFPA believes it advisable to explore whether the capacity to perform such competency assessments can be built up within the United Nations system as opposed to having them done by the private sector, as is now the case. The Fund also acknowledges the need to address such complex issues as the annual performance assessment of sitting Resident Coordinators in their capacity as coordinators as well as the competency assessment of sitting and former Resident Coordinators.

20. Efforts are being made, and should be intensified, to widen the pool of expertise of Resident Coordinators and to increase the participatory and open nature of the selection process. The issue of increasing the number of women candidates is a particular challenge in this regard, as women still make up less than 30 per cent of the total number of Resident Coordinators.

Recommendations

21. The Council may wish to:

(a) Identify ways to streamline coordination mechanisms and to ensure that processes result in better and more effective programme delivery;

(b) Reaffirm the need to broaden the pool of Resident Coordinators and to bring about a better gender balance in the Resident Coordinator system.

D. Implementation of the common country assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

22. UNFPA has made a concerted effort to integrate the CCA and UNDAF guidelines issued by the UNDG into its own programming processes. UNFPA has sent instructions to the field to use the CCA and UNDAF, where they are adequate, in place of its own programming tools. The Fund, with the assistance of the UNDG, organized an orientation workshop for its headquarters staff and plans to train its staff further in the use of the new programming instruments. Using the experience gained to date, UNFPA will be reviewing the draft CCA and UNDAF documents with a view to learning lessons and ensuring that the documents receive the appropriate substantive technical inputs in all areas, including population and reproductive health. UNFPA will continue to work with its United Nations partners in streamlining and simplifying programming tools and processes not only to bring about greater complementarity and impact in their work but also to limit the burden on country offices and other partners in the field.

23. UNFPA attaches great importance to the issue of indicators and the collaborative efforts required to develop system-wide common indicators for effective programming. At the meeting, organized by UNFPA, of the Task Force on Basic Social Services for All in September 1999, UNFPA emphasized the importance of the CCA and UNDAF in this endeavour and stressed

the need for developing common data sets, agreeing on appropriate indicators to monitor progress in reaching United Nations conference goals, adopting a broader focus on "qualitative indicators" that would give a full picture of the enabling environment affecting the primary quantitative indicators, and building country capacity in data collection, analysis and use.

Problems and lessons learned

24. UNFPA has played an active role in the UNDG Learning Network on the CCA/UNDAF from which lessons have been extracted. Moreover, with the introduction of the new programming tools, the spirit of collaboration has clearly resulted in strengthened team work and partnership, especially at the country levels, and progress has been made in unifying United Nations system partners under the vision of the reform initiative. Opportunities have been created to work together to promote programme coordination and joint programming and evaluation.

25. The overall quality of CCA and UNDAF documents has improved significantly since the pilot phase. However, efforts should be stepped up to incorporate lessons learned into the documents. This will ensure that the documents are more substantive and analytical, with more clearly identified priorities for the United Nations system. It will also make them more strategic and more responsive to the global United Nations conferences. Improving the quality of common databases and indicators is a challenge, especially in respect of identifying indicators and establishing and managing a common database. The problems in this area are complex. In some cases, data are simply not available; in others, the data exist but are not reliable. In many situations, one has to choose the most appropriate indicator from among a large number of possible indicators. Work in the use of indicators in the social sector is especially constrained, and needs special efforts in cooperation with the Governments. All this complicates the process and potentially places undue burden on country offices and on Governments.

26. Resources must be made available with more predictability for such a complex exercise involving a detailed situational analysis, especially since a large number of indicators are needed for use as a general guide. The lack of resources to develop indicators and data systems therefore needs to be urgently addressed.

Recommendations

27. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the importance of data collection and indicators in the implementation of the CCA/UNDAF processes and recommend that resources be made available on a more predictable basis in order that the complex work in this area may be undertaken;

(b) Reaffirm the lead role of Governments in the process;

(c) Urge the need for predictable general resources for sustaining the impact of the CCA and UNDAF;

(d) Urge that steps be taken to ensure maximum compatibility between the UNDAF and all other frameworks for development assistance.

E. Harmonization of programmes and procedures

28. Harmonization of programme cycles and simplification of procedures require effective inter-agency coordination and collaboration at both the headquarters and country levels. UNFPA has been working closely with the UNDG in this area and has sought to consolidate the harmonization process and ensure that appropriate priority is given to this at the country level. Several activities have been undertaken as follows:

(a) Promoting and monitoring the finalization of harmonization action plans with clear time-frames endorsed by all members of the country team;

(b) Conducting regular reviews and taking joint decisions on country-specific cases and issues to facilitate further efforts at harmonization;

(c) Coordinating with country offices to ensure accurate understanding of the new procedures;

(d) Participating in the monitoring system within the UNDG Sub-group to ensure consistency and adherence to the endorsed harmonization time-frames.

Problems and lessons learned

29. Considerable progress has been made in the area of harmonization, but more still needs to be done. Steps have to be taken to ensure that harmonization can be sustained. Programme procedures have to be further simplified and harmonized, and efforts have to be made to ensure that programme cycles coincide with national development plans and sectoral plans. Firm guidelines have to be developed based on the guidance note on joint programming that was issued in 1999. Priority must be given to identifying key areas in the formulation and implementation of joint programmes, including, *inter alia*, the simplification and harmonization of financial procedures and reporting requirements relating to programme and project management. A desk review of experience to date emphasizing country office experience and identifying best approaches and lessons learned would be useful in such an endeavour.

Recommendations

30. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the progress achieved in harmonization by UNDG members, and encourage UNDG members to take the necessary steps to further such harmonization and ensure that it can be sustained;

(b) Urge further monitoring of the harmonization at the country level.

F. Gender mainstreaming

31. UNFPA has cooperated fully in implementing the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women 1996-2000. UNFPA also continues to focus on the International Conference on Population and Development mandate of advancing gender equality and equity, the empowerment of women, the elimination of all kinds of violence against women, and ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility as cornerstones of population and development. Specific activities have included the following:

(a) Issuing guidelines on *UNFPA Support for Mainstreaming Gender Issues in Population and Development Programmes* and revising the guidelines for the Fund's three core programming areas to ensure that the gender perspective has been appropriately mainstreamed in each;

(b) Allocating resources for gender concerns through UNFPA's three core programme areas, and taking steps through the budget coding system to better reflect the Fund's commitment to gender issues;

(c) Strengthening efforts at the country level to build national capacities on gender issues through its Country Technical Services Teams (CSTs); and developing a comprehensive training manual on gender, population and development to facilitate this;

(d) Undertaking special efforts to collect and disseminate sex-disaggregated data as well as conducting studies on such issues as the eradication of female genital mutilation (FGM); violence against women and girls; the socialization of boys and strategies for greater involvement of men in reproductive and sexual health matters; and the impact of the human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) on women, among other things.

32. At the inter-agency level, UNFPA:

(a) Actively participates in the UNDG Sub-group on Indicators, one of whose main aims is to ensure that indicators and budgets are gender-sensitive;

(b) Served as the Task Manager in the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality for the review of the gender focal point function in the United Nations system. The results of this study will serve as an input to the five-year review process for the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995);

(c) Participates actively in various inter-agency working groups, such as the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality; the UNDG Sub-group on Gender; the UNDG Sub-group on the Right to Development; the UNDG Sub-group on Indicators; and inter-agency regional campaigns on violence against women (for example, in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Africa);

(d) Participates in the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality Sub-group on Best Practices and has finalized a publication on best practices in gender mainstreaming within the framework of population and development.

Problems and lessons learned

33. UNFPA's experience confirms that the benefits of individual control over one's reproductive and

economic life reinforce each other. It is important, therefore, to provide support to improve women's livelihoods, while also ensuring that they have access to reproductive health services and information. It is also essential to intensify efforts to involve men in activities to eliminate inequalities between men and women and to promote women's empowerment in all spheres. A related challenge is to bring about a better understanding of key concepts in this area such as gender and empowerment.

34. Women and girls, particularly in armed conflicts, are especially vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS, as well as to various forms of violence against them. They are also often far more vulnerable than men are to the effects of environmental degradation and pollution, particularly as regards their reproductive health. Moreover, in many countries, adolescents, especially female adolescents, are denied access to and information about reproductive and sexual health services. Recent economic and political developments in some countries, and the consequent decrease in investments in the social sector, have disproportionately affected the well-being of women and girls.

35. All this has been compounded by the lack of resources, particularly international resources, to implement the actions agreed to in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, as well as by the persistence of social, cultural and political factors that perpetuate discrimination against women and impede their empowerment.

G. Gender balance within UNFPA

36. UNFPA has adopted guidelines that clearly identify goals, tasks and accountability for gender mainstreaming at all levels. Translating the instructions of the Secretary-General on accountability of heads of agencies and programme managers on the issue of gender balance, UNFPA has placed emphasis on the recruitment of women for professional positions. As a result, women now occupy 50 per cent of all professional posts in UNFPA. This includes having four women out of seven Directors at the D-2 level (57 per cent), one of two Deputy Directors at the Assistant Secretary-General level and the Executive Director herself. UNFPA continues to be a strong advocate for issues pertaining to gender equality, specifically within the United Nations system, and will continue to emphasize the recruitment of women for professional positions.

Problems and lessons learned

37. Given the nature of its mandate and the focus of its programmes, UNFPA is fully aware of the importance of ensuring gender balance among UNFPA Representatives in the field. The Fund, therefore, will continue to make every effort to recruit qualified women to serve as its country representatives.

Recommendations

38. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of UNFPA's achievements in the area of gender mainstreaming;

(b) Call for further efforts to accelerate progress in this area, drawing on experiences gained and on lessons learned during the five-year review process for the International Conference on Population and Development.

H. Capacity-building

39. The development of national capacity was identified as one of the critical factors in the key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. In addition to its country programmes, UNFPA has two major programmes whose primary aim is to help countries build their capacity to implement the Programme of Action: the Technical Advisory Programme (2000-2003), which is in its third cycle; and the UNFPA intercountry programme (2000-2003), which is now in its fourth cycle. Both seek to improve the linkages between and among all levels of programme delivery — country, regional and intercountry. The process of development of UNFPA's Technical Advisory Programme has resulted in detailed discussions with programme countries on specific needs for technical assistance in capacity development. The focus in programming is on such key areas as adolescents, gender, knowledge management and distance learning, advocacy, and the expansion of partnerships on the basis of the comparative advantage of United Nations organizations and other entities.

40. In 1999, UNFPA endorsed guidelines on assessing its capacity to implement population programmes. UNFPA's participation in inter-agency groups and networks on monitoring capacity-building has been undertaken with a view to strengthening the impact of its assistance at the field level. In the context of a CCPOQ seminar on capacity-building, UNFPA provided proposals for identifying and strengthening common concepts and strategies in this area. UNFPA's initiative on the Sub-group on Programme Operations resulted in a UNDG report in March 1999 on legal frameworks and relevant legislation/policies, and on management techniques to assist in the decentralization of the operations of national entities where appropriate. These efforts have emphasized the importance of accountability, results-based management, and the strategic planning involved in CCA and UNDAF exercises. The principle of gender mainstreaming has been consistently taken into account.

41. The aim of these efforts has been to strengthen the use of the CCA and UNDAF to assess national capacities, foster common perceptions of capacity-building issues and develop indicators to monitor capacity-building. These issues have been examined concurrently with the study of greater use of participatory and joint monitoring and evaluation exercises, continuation of efforts for joint training schemes and strategies, and the need for simplification and flexibility of procedures.

Problems and lessons learned

42. Recent studies undertaken by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat in the context of the triennial policy review show that traditional means of capacity-building need a substantive overhaul. Partnerships have to be strengthened considerably to identify and develop further instruments for capacity-building in an environment of new emerging frameworks for development. Moreover, it is important to involve civil society in such activities at the country level, since this would ensure that capacity-building at various national levels would become truly participatory. Thus, the process of involving all partners in the preparation of country programmes is as important as the actual preparation of the country programme itself.

43. However, capacity-building does not happen by itself. It has to be specifically and strategically planned for, and based on a careful analysis of what works best in a given situation. The actions to be taken should be determined through comprehensive logical framework analyses and results-based approaches. The system-wide institutionalization of such an approach would have the added value of maximizing the limited financial and human resources available in field offices.

Recommendations

44. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of inter-agency efforts to share experiences on capacity-building and encourage all United Nations agencies to participate in such forums to ensure a wider exchange of views and experiences;

(b) Encourage Governments to take note of the importance of the civil society in capacity-building;

(c) Encourage the use of monitoring and evaluation as integral parts of capacity-building, especially where it relates to efforts to formulate strategies in this area.

I. Common premises and services

45. During 1998, the Sub-group on Common Premises and Services undertook 12 separate missions covering 17 countries in support of the United Nations House initiative. In 1999, resource constraints limited these undertakings to 9 missions covering 13 separate countries. The issue of how to fund such missions was resolved for UNDG partner agencies in their respective Executive Boards wherein each agency submitted requests for dedicated funding for this initiative. The Executive Board of UNDP and of UNFPA agreed to the UNFPA proposal to utilize the field accommodation reserve for this purpose. As a result, the Sub-group is at present actively pursuing projects in 22 separate countries. During 1998, 26 United Nations Houses were established, with a further 6 added in 1999. Ten additional countries have been preliminarily identified as having high potential for designation in 2000 as United Nations Houses.

46. On the issue of common services, a dedicated UNDG common-services database has been established following the analysis of data received in response to a comprehensive survey carried out at the country level by United Nations Resident Coordinators. In order to capitalize on this, the UNDG has scheduled an inter-

agency workshop during March 2000 to develop United Nations system guidelines for the implementation and management of common services at the country level. UNFPA continues to invest the requisite staff time and extra costs to provide the necessary funding in order to participate actively in all such common premises and services initiatives.

Problems and lessons learned

47. Some important principles have been identified as the basis for success at individual country levels. These include the utilization of sound business practices including the preparation of cost-benefit analyses of real-estate options; the initiation of advance work and due-diligence studies; the participation of all agencies at the country level on the issue of harmonized services; the designation of focal points by each agency and the active coordination of efforts by the Resident Coordinator; and the involvement of appropriate technical experts (real-estate professionals, architects and engineers) together with designated project management. This last point is particularly pertinent in view of the fact that expertise in areas relating to this issue is often not available within the United Nations system and thus needs to be sought externally.

Recommendations

48. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the progress achieved in this area;

(b) Underscore the importance of transparency, and shared management and accountability in efforts under way;

(c) Urge the United Nations system to use a pragmatic, cost-benefit-oriented approach in upcoming initiatives.

J. Cooperation with the World Bank

49. In 1999, the UNDG set up a Learning Group for inter-agency collaboration on issues pertaining to the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) and the Resident Coordinator system, and for generating innovative ideas for dealing with the debt situation in the heavily indebted poor countries of the world (the HIPC initiative). UNFPA collaborated closely on these issues both in the UNDG at headquarters and in country offices. The Learning Group was convened to follow up on the meeting between the Deputy-Secretary-General and the senior management of the World Bank to enable the United Nations system to collectively follow the CDF pilot, both as a learning experience and as a means of ensuring feedback to their organizations. The focus was on country-level experiences with the CDF process in the pilot countries.

50. During discussions, UNFPA stressed the importance of coordination between the UNDAF and the CDF processes, especially on the fundamental need for ownership of both of the processes by the Governments concerned. UNFPA also emphasized the importance of the sectoral approach and the need for joint analytical work and a common analysis, so as to avoid duplication of efforts in this area.

51. During the past year, UNFPA and the World Bank continued to increase their cooperation, holding more frequent consultations between UNFPA's Geographic Divisions and the corresponding entities in the Bank both at headquarters and in the field. Moreover, the World Bank has made increasing use of UNFPA's procurement services, and it is expected that the volume of such procurement requests will continue to increase in 2000.

52. Collaboration has also increased between UNFPA and the World Bank in various ongoing initiatives such as the Safe Motherhood Initiative, Partners in Population and Development, Joint United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) (UNAIDS), the UNFPA Global Initiative on Contraceptive Requirements and Logistics Management Needs in Developing Countries, and sector-wide approaches (SWAps). In the area of training, UNFPA is a co-sponsor of the World Bank Institute's course on Population, Reproductive Health and Health Sector Reform. UNFPA staff participate in World Bank activities such as the Human Development Week. The World Bank is an advocate for the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and it took part in the special session of the General Assembly for the five-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and in the round tables and technical symposiums that were part of the five-year review

process. The World Bank also participates in the meetings of the Task Force on Basic Social Services for All chaired by the Executive Director of UNFPA.

Problems and lessons learned

53. The emergence of the CDF at about the same time as the UNDAF requires that the World Bank and the United Nations system continue to work together to ensure maximum compatibility between the two instruments and, correspondingly, greater coordination at the country level, both among the various partners of the United Nations system and with Governments. It is also important to involve civil society and the private sector in the development frameworks to the extent possible and to continue to build confidence and trust among all key partners in the development process. Experience shows that the key to effective partnerships is, of course, commitment to the development priorities of the countries themselves. Efforts should therefore be intensified to secure agreement on objectives and expected outcomes in line with country strategies and priorities.

54. On the issue of indicators, the participation of programme countries in developing country-specific indicators must be enhanced and ensured. Moreover, greater emphasis has to be given to indicators related to the goals agreed to at the major international conferences. Given the World Bank's efforts in the area on indicators, there is a need for greater collaboration with the World Bank on the complex task of developing indicators for post-conflict situations.

Recommendations

55. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the efforts of the UNDG in increasing the levels of collaboration between the World Bank and the United Nations system, in particular through such initiatives as the Learning Group;

(b) Urge that further action be taken on the principles identified during these efforts, such as ensuring greater complementarity among donors and their programmes, as well as greater harmonization and coherence among them;

(c) Urge sustained collaborative efforts between the United Nations system and the World Bank in developing indicators for post-conflict situations and in ensuring cross-sectoral linkages among priorities in country strategies;

(d) Encourage optimization and cohesion in the reporting requirements from the various UNDG partners on the issue of collaboration with the World Bank so as to avoid increased workloads at the country level.

K. Monitoring and evaluation

56. In 1999, UNFPA undertook several internal analyses of its monitoring and evaluation system and practices and initiated steps to address weaknesses identified therein. For example, the Fund carried out a desk review to assess the application of the logical framework (logframe) approach to country programming as mandated by UNFPA's new programme guidelines issued in late 1997. This exercise reviewed actual logframe matrices prepared in connection with selected approved country programmes and examined the process used in their preparation including the use of logframes in monitoring and evaluation. Within the context of preparing the Fund's first MYFF, UNFPA conducted feasibility studies in five countries (Burkina Faso, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, and the United Republic of Tanzania) in order to assess the strengths, constraints and capacity-building needs of country offices in implementing the logframe approach within the context of a results-based approach. These studies, together with the findings of other analytical exercises such as thematic evaluations, policy application reviews and audits, were very instructive in highlighting strengths and shortcomings in project design, monitoring and evaluation.

57. Two important internal learning events took place during the year: (a) a workshop to strengthen staff understanding about the need for, and use of, indicators in programming; and (b) a workshop on the concept of results-based management, and the key elements of the MYFF and its implications for the organizational systems and practices of UNFPA. Moreover, the Fund established a web site to enable wider access to the findings of thematic evaluations. As a result, abstracts by topic as well as the full reports on thematic evaluations conducted since 1992 are now retrievable, as will be other analyses of evaluation findings on UNFPA-supported programmes.

58. UNFPA is now an active partner in the UNDP network of evaluation resource persons (EVALNET), and led a UNDP evaluation in Guyana on a project in capacity-building in the health sector. The Fund established its own Evaluation Network, which provides the names of the UNFPA focal points for evaluation from each of the Fund's Country Technical Services Teams and its Office of Oversight and Evaluation. The aims of the Network are to promote learning from UNFPA's programme experience; to facilitate the ability of the Fund to demonstrate results for which it is accountable; and to facilitate communication and knowledge-sharing on evaluation issues. The focal points met during the year to draw up a work plan for 2000-2001.

Problems and lessons learned

59. The desk review of the logframe found that the initial application of the approach was somewhat weak owing to both conceptual and technical problems. The original strategy of "cascade" training did not seem to produce the intended results and may even have led to a lack of uniform understanding of the basics of the logframe techniques. Moreover, the lack of comprehensive data systems in many programme countries has made the selection of performance indicators more complex, and has heightened awareness of the need for resources to collect comprehensive data. More attention must be given to providing field offices with succinct, user-friendly information that synthesizes programme experiences.

60. Inter-agency collaboration in evaluation can be productive and useful, but the benefits to the collaborating organizations should be weighed in the context of the logistic and other difficulties inherent in carrying out such evaluations.

Recommendations

61. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of UNFPA's efforts to strengthen monitoring and evaluation techniques both within the organization and in collaborative efforts with all development partners;

(b) Urge that the United Nations system accelerate its efforts to strengthen monitoring and evaluation capacities at the country level;

(c) Urge all United Nations organizations to take the necessary steps to ensure the smooth interface among their evaluation databases;

(d) Encourage United Nations organizations to provide predictable and timely resources for staff training on matters related to new monitoring and evaluation techniques.

III. Follow-up to international conferences

62. UNFPA attaches great importance to the follow-up activities to the global conferences of the 1990s, in particular with respect to the linkages among population, poverty and environmental degradation. UNFPA has contributed to the close collaboration between the United Nations system and Governments and other partners in efforts to monitor progress in these areas based on jointly derived indicators. In 1999, UNFPA's activities were at two distinct levels: (a) the five-year review of the International Conference on Population and Development; and (b) system-wide collaboration in the follow-up to conferences, particularly those undergoing five-year reviews.

A. UNFPA and the five-year review and appraisal of the International Conference on Population and Development

63. As was stressed by the Secretary-General at the special session of the General Assembly in June/July 1999, the five-year review and appraisal of the International Conference on Population and Development process sought to emphasize the linkages between population and development, as well as between sexual and reproductive health and human rights. The shortfall in the financial resources that had been agreed to in Cairo in 1994 and the effect of such shortfalls on human lives were illustrated during the review. The review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action concentrated primarily on policy changes and operational experiences at the country level in order to identify facilitating factors and constraints encountered during the initial five-year period since the conference. Those concrete experiences provided a basis for delineating further actions needed to accelerate and fine-tune the

implementation of the Programme of Action in key areas, including the three core programme areas of the Fund.

64. As part of the five-year review process, UNFPA conducted a field-level inquiry that focused on the following key areas: policies and programmes in population and development; gender equality, equity and women's empowerment; reproductive rights and reproductive health care; and government partnerships and collaboration with civil society. Some 114 developing countries and countries with economies in transition responded, as did 18 developed countries. The responses of the inquiry, which focused on lessons learned and constraints encountered, were coded and entered into a database for analysis, and the results were compiled and published. The resulting database allows for comparison of changes in policies and programmes since the International Conference on Population and Development and can be used as a barometer to measure progress made in implementing the Programme of Action.

65. UNFPA has sought to give strategic focus to the follow-up to all international conferences, and to this end, organized a Task Force on Basic Social Services for All meeting immediately after the five-year review to work out the follow-up arrangements with other United Nations partners. The need for coordination under the lead agency system was emphasized at the meeting.

Problems and lessons learned

66. The process for the five-year review and appraisal of the International Conference on Population and Development showed that actions taken since the Conference had produced positive results, in particular in such areas as improving the quality of and access to reproductive health services; in formulating programmes and policies to meet the reproductive health needs of young people; and in protecting the rights of women and promoting their empowerment, among others. However, it also showed that for some countries and regions, progress has been limited, and in some cases setbacks have occurred. Women and girls continue to face harmful discrimination; the HIV/AIDS pandemic is more severe than anticipated in 1994; far too many women are dying or becoming ill as a result of pregnancy and childbirth; and millions of couples and individuals still lack access to reproductive health information and services.

67. There has been some success in integrating population concerns into development strategies in some countries, but much more needs to be done, in particular by way of institutional, policy and legislative changes in the areas of population and development and reproductive health and rights. The need for an enhanced role for civil society has also been recognized. However, the lack of coordination mechanisms and funding constraints often preclude more extensive collaboration between government and civil society groups. Moreover, there are often no legal frameworks, regulations or guidelines to facilitate partnerships with non-governmental organizations, and the lack of human and financial resources and of technical capacity in both governmental and non-governmental organizations impede effective partnerships. Much of this also pertains to the private sector, which remains underinvolved in population and development activities in many programme countries.

68. Sociocultural factors continue to hinder the full achievement of gender equality and equity, especially in the areas of poverty among female-headed households, and these continue to be disparities in earning capabilities, high levels of maternal mortality and morbidity, violence against women and girls, trafficking and forced prostitution, and under-representation in positions of power and decision-making.

B. System-wide collaboration and other United Nations conference reviews

69. UNFPA has been collaborating very closely with the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat and all other development partners in the preparations for the five-year review of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Many collaborative programmes are in place with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the education of the girl child.

70. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development stressed the need for integrating population and environment issues in planning and decision-making and for modifying unsustainable consumption and production patterns in order to foster sustainable resource use and prevent environmental degradation. It also called for

implementation of policies to address the ecological implications of population dynamics. UNFPA has collaborated closely with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other conservation organizations in various activities, including conducting workshops on these linkages.

71. UNFPA has made sustained efforts to identify linkages between population, poverty and environmental factors for integrated programming purposes in keeping with the International Conference on Population and Development. As with the five-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, UNFPA is cooperating closely in all inter-agency efforts for the five-year review of the World Summit for Social Development. The International Conference on Population and Development recognized the linkages between human rights issues and the need for enhancing the full participation of all relevant groups, especially women, in population and environmental decision-making. Several programming interventions have been crafted by UNFPA at the field level in the knowledge that such investments provide choices and create opportunities for change for the most vulnerable groups. These have specifically been in the key sectors of health, education, and economic and resource management.

Problems and lessons learned

72. There appears to be scope for greater coordination and cohesion in providing development assistance among all the partners involved in the follow-up to the major conferences, including the willingness to utilize tools already available to the United Nations system from earlier efforts. However, it is essential that the agencies in the field and those that provide normative leadership to the United Nations system work closely together in operationalizing conference outcomes, with the guidance of the Governments, and in particular in developing integrated sectoral interventions as well as key system-wide indicators.

73. This is particularly important since most decision-making and funding — internationally, nationally and locally — remain divided by sectors such as agriculture, industry, trade, labour, education and health, among others. Cross-cutting issues such as poverty, the environment, women's empowerment, and concerns affecting youth and adolescents are therefore often inadequately addressed. This is exacerbated by econometric models and budget allocation frameworks that include only, or largely, economic and financial variables and thus fail to account for long-term social, environmental and population consequences.

74. All this is compounded by the fact that bridges are often not yet in place between and among specialized branches of Governments, members of civil society and the international community. As a result, although community-based organizations and local non-governmental organizations in many countries have been able to develop innovative approaches for meeting people's needs while simultaneously promoting improved environmental management and reproductive health services, they have not succeeded in coordinating these efforts with national Governments and international organizations.

75. There is also the related problem of ensuring that all stakeholders, particularly women, participate in policy-making and programme planning.

Recommendations

76. The Council may wish to:

(a) Note the progress in integrated follow-up to conferences both at inter-agency and individual agency levels;

(b) Emphasize the need for greater involvement of women in integrated programming, *inter alia*, through gender-sensitive environmental and reproductive health initiatives;

(c) Reiterate the need for all Governments to participate actively in operationalizing the key recommendations of all United Nations conference outcomes;

(d) Emphasize the use of theme groups for cross-cutting effectiveness;

(e) Emphasize the importance of monitoring conference goals;

(f) Call upon all Member States to make available the resources necessary for the full implementation of the conference outcomes, and to participate fully in all the reviews of global conferences and their preparatory processes.

IV. Humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

77. UNFPA provides support for reproductive health in emergency and crisis situations on the basis that reproductive health needs are needs that transcend conflict and that such needs are the health rights of all people regardless of their geographical location. UNFPA therefore seeks to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their status or condition, have access to reproductive health services.

78. Since 1994, the Fund has been very active, within the scope of its mandate and limited resources, in focusing international attention on issues of reproductive health and rights in emergency and crisis situations. Currently, UNFPA has 21 projects in operation in this area. The Fund also has a wealth of experience in data collection, analysis and use that can be made available in emergency situations. In many cases, UNFPA has been able to provide the necessary demographic data for the development of humanitarian needs assessments as well as for sectoral planning for rehabilitation. UNFPA is now active in needs assessments led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and in supporting relief-intervention monitoring systems through the establishment of basic indicators and implementation of sentinel surveillance systems. These database development activities, which are a standard part of UNFPA programmes, are increasingly in demand in emergency and crisis situations. UNFPA also addresses violence against women and seeks to ensure that reproductive health is part of health-sector rehabilitation. UNFPA fully supports all activities initiated by the Secretary-General to protect all United Nations staff members and humanitarian assistance personnel in emergency and other areas of United Nations functioning.

Problems and lessons learned

79. Despite the achievements of UNFPA activities in emergency and crisis situations, the Fund's impact in this area is constrained by the limited success in mobilizing outside funds for projects included in consolidated appeals. There is also not enough attention being given to making development assistance applicable to humanitarian emergencies and crisis, or to addressing certain specific issues in emergency and crisis situations such as gender concerns and reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, among others.

Recommendations

80. The Council may wish to:

(a) Reaffirm the need for special protection measures for all vulnerable people, especially women and girls, in conflict situations;

(b) Call for all possible measures to protect United Nations staff and respect the privileges and immunities granted under international law;

(c) Urge measures for timely responses to provide immediate support for reproductive health and data needs in emergency and crisis situations, and encourage the efforts made by UNFPA in this area.

Notes

[1] *Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XIII.18), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

III. Extract from the report of the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund on its second regular session, held from 3 to 7 April 2000

UNDP report

1. The Administrator introduced his annual report to the Economic and Social Council (DP/2000/11), noting that it was again presented in the common format and approach adopted by UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNFPA. Work was under way to prepare a consolidated list of issues, as called for by the Economic and Social Council, in consultation with the Consultative Committee for Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ). The report was also an important part of the preparation by UNDP for the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities by the General Assembly in 2001.

2. The report covered the Secretary-General's reform and the implementation of the triennial policy review, the integrated and coordinated follow-up to United Nations conferences and summits, and special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance. Each section included major issues, highlights of achievements in 1999, problems encountered and lessons learned and recommendations for action by the Economic and Social Council. Within those major themes, sections were included on structures and mechanisms of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), funding and resources, the resident coordinator system, the common country assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), harmonization of programming periods and procedures, gender-mainstreaming and gender balance, capacity-building, common premises and services, cooperation with the World Bank, monitoring and evaluation, and the follow-up to United Nations conferences. The final section on special economic, humanitarian and disaster-relief assistance set out some of the challenges faced by UNDP with its UNDG partners in addressing new crises in a timely manner.

Comments by delegations

3. Many delegations congratulated UNDP on the report, citing its analytical quality and the improvements introduced on the basis of comments made by the Executive Board in previous years. The enhanced reporting gave the Board better insight in areas where there was marked progress and where there were unsolved challenges. One delegation stated that the reports could be even more useful if more concrete proposals to the Economic and Social Council on how to solve difficulties were developed. The joint format was welcomed, with one delegation stating that the World Food Programme (WFP) should also follow it in the future. One delegation stated that UNDP should provide more information on the particular role and contribution of the organization with regard to capacity-building or on the concrete contributions made in the follow-up to international conferences, allowing Board members to focus on more agency-specific comments for consideration by the Council. Speakers looked forward to receiving the consolidated list of issues to be discussed by the Council at its substantive session in 2000.

4. One delegation noted the lack of a reference to the Administrator's Business Plans for 2000-2003 endorsed by the Executive Board at the first regular session 2000 and his commitment to making UNDP more effective at the country level.

5. One delegation recalled previous requests for joint reporting by the funds and programmes, viewing the report as a step in a positive direction. Joining the reports of UNDP and UNFPA into one report would demonstrate increased collaboration among the UNDG members.

6. Many speakers expressed appreciation for efforts to implement the Secretary-General's reform programme through UNDG and its subsidiary bodies as well as through collaborative programming instruments. Several delegations welcomed the increased participation of United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes in the UNDG and in the resident coordinator system, and encouraged greater involvement on their part. Rationalization of the work of the UNDG subsidiary machinery was also welcomed. While enhanced collaboration and exchanges between UNDG and the Administrative Committee on Coordination machinery was welcomed,

one delegation urged that the cooperation should not delay the further implementation of the United Nations reform programme through UNDG. Enhanced collaboration between the United Nations system and the United Nations Staff College project in Turin was also welcomed.

7. Several delegations underlined the need to examine ways to improve the resident coordinator selection process, including with regard to enhancing the gender balance among resident coordinators. One speaker emphasized the need for resident coordinators to understand the United Nations system, thus calling into question the recommendation regarding recruitment from outside of the system.

8. Progress on the CCA and UNDAF was recognized by several delegations. One speaker noted that the UNDAF had been highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century" (A/54/2000). The same speaker requested further information on the interest shown by bilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations in the CCA. With regard to UNDAF, Governments of programme countries were encouraged to play a leading role in the process of defining, based on the outcomes of United Nations global conferences, an umbrella arrangement for all activities of the participating United Nations organizations in a particular country. One delegation expressed its willingness to participate in such consultation exercises when invited. Another delegation underlined that the CCA must be fully elaborated in cooperation with the Governments concerned. Another speaker noted the concern about the lack of focus on outputs noted at the first regular session 2000 and about the depth of cooperation on the UNDAF, points that were not included in the report.

9. On the topic of harmonization of programming periods and procedures, speakers underlined the role that could be played by the Executive Board in harmonizing the financial rules and regulations of the funds and programmes that would be of direct benefit to programme countries. One delegation supported the need to pay special attention to the sustainability of the harmonization measures to be taken. Several delegations requested further recommendations on joint programming. In that regard, the guidance note on joint programming issued in 1999 was requested for distribution to the Board. One speaker, expressed particular support for the recommendation contained in paragraph 31, in which it was recommended that the Council might wish to encourage members of the UNDG to address the areas for further simplification and harmonization of procedures, identified in consultation with resident coordinators and country teams, especially with regard to national execution. Another speaker encouraged countries that hosted United Nations organizations to make specific arrangements to establish United Nations houses.

10. It was underlined that the simplification of country programming processes should take into account the role of CCAs and UNDAFs in setting the strategic framework for country programmes. In that regard, one delegation suggested that the funds and programmes could initiate a discussion on the idea of submitting UNDAFs to their respective executive boards as a frame of reference for individual country programmes and subsequent collaborative programming. Some speakers emphasized that the CCA and UNDAF should not minimize the roles played by individual United Nations organizations at the country level. One delegation underlined that there was a risk that the CCAs and UNDAFs would focus exclusively on social sectors and social development, leaving out the broader macroeconomic and sectoral considerations, as noted in paragraph 25 (b).

11. Delegations welcomed the growing cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and encouraged them to use the CCA to formulate the comprehensive development framework (CDF) and the poverty-reduction strategy papers (PRSPs). One delegation stated that the United Nations system had a distinct comparative advantage in poverty eradication and emphasized the need to avoid overlap between the work of the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations system. Another speaker urged complementarity between the UNDAF and the CDF and the consolidated appeals process. The need for further clarification on the respective roles and division of labour in aid coordination and resource mobilization among the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations system was emphasized. One speaker highlighted the difference between the grant nature of United Nations funding and the loan nature of that of the Bretton Woods institutions. That speaker also expressed disagreement with recommendation contained in paragraph 57 (a), in which it was recommended that the Council might wish to encourage the ongoing dialogue of UNDG members

with the Bretton Woods institutions regarding the CCA, the UNDAF, the comprehensive development frameworks, the poverty-reduction strategy papers and the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility, stating that linkages between programming instruments must be developed only by the Governments of programme countries. New mandates for UNDG in this regard were not supported by that delegation.

12. One delegation called into question the accuracy of recommendation 70 (a) regarding the 20/20 initiative.

13. One delegation urged an examination of the trends in overall official development assistance as compared with the funding of the United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes. While some delegations supported the discontinuation of the United Nations pledging conference, others underlined the need to consult with all relevant parties, within the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, before making a decision. Concern was underlined about the serious decline in core contributions to UNDP, a factor that caused the reduction in funding programmes in recipient countries.

14. One speaker urged enhanced cooperation in the area of special economic, humanitarian and disaster-relief assistance situations, with increased consultation among United Nations entities, particularly with regard to cooperation at the country level.

Response by the Administrator

15. The Administrator noted that the comments made by the Executive Board on the report to the Economic and Social Council were substantive and very useful.

16. He underlined that much effort was being put into enhancing the gender balance among resident coordinators, with the major impediment being the shortage of women among the candidates. With regard to joint programming and harmonization, he shared the view that progress must be made in this area to the greatest extent possible. He noted that the CCAs allowed the rationalization of programmes.

17. With regard to the relationship of the United Nations system with the Bretton Woods institutions, he agreed that the nature of the respective mandates must be taken into consideration although there were opportunities for complementarity. The Administrator noted that there had been progress at the institutional level in the relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions, including through talks with the President of the World Bank and the Acting Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund.

18. He noted that additional comments and questions would be addressed in the context of other agenda items and on a bilateral basis.

19. The Executive Board agreed to transmit to the Economic and Social Council, for its attention, Executive Board decision 99/20 on the United Nations Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration in which the Board had endorsed the plans to phase out the activities of the Fund by the end of 2000.

UNFPA report

20. In introducing the report (DP/FPA/2000/7), the Executive Director noted that it had been prepared in the joint format agreed to by UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA. It provided a brief overview of some of the key issues in the implementation of the reform programme of the Secretary-General and the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review; in follow-up to international conferences; and in humanitarian and disaster relief assistance. She stated that in the report the Fund had attempted to provide a frank analysis of lessons learned and issues and problems requiring further attention.

Comments by delegations

21. Numerous delegations welcomed the report and congratulated UNFPA on the report's improved analytical quality. A number of delegations expressed appreciation for the progress achieved in the harmonization of programme cycles and simplification of procedures and commended UNFPA for working closely with the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) in those and other areas. Several delegations stressed the need to involve Governments in the harmonization process. Several delegations welcomed the participation of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in the UNDG and stated that other United Nations organizations should also be encouraged to participate.

22. One delegation, speaking also on behalf of another delegation, noted that the report was excellent;

however, there was a slight disconnect between the "meat" of the report and the recommendations to the Economic and Social Council. The delegation offered the following suggestions and observations: How should the Council go about increasing the involvement of agencies in UNDG? On the resident coordinator assessment, should the Council be provided a scoresheet on the quality of resident coordinators and the locations/agencies where problems had been encountered? Are there examples of non-United Nations agencies using the Common Country Assessment (CCA) as a basis for programming? Since joint programming remains a difficult matter, recommendations should be made pushing this area forward. When would UNFPA and UNDP present proposals for common financial rules and regulations and joint programming and sector-wide approaches (SWAps)? UNFPA had emphasized the importance of the sectoral approach and the need for joint analytical work and common analysis. The World Bank should take measures to enable it to participate in the SWAp process.

23. Another delegation, while welcoming the joint format of the UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF reports, regretted that the format had not been followed by WFP. The same delegation added that in addition to following a joint format, the reports should concentrate on highlighting the particular role and contribution of each fund/programme and the challenges faced. The delegation added that such aspects had been incorporated into the UNFPA report to a greater extent than in the reports of the other funds and programmes. Another delegation, while noting that the reports were a step in the right direction with regard to joint reporting, observed that the two reports could easily be joined into one report carrying the same message. The same delegation considered that to be a sign of increased collaboration among the partner agencies of UNDG, including through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which was bringing organizations closer together and expanding the area of common ground. Regarding the recommendations to the Economic and Social Council, the delegation noted that it would be more useful to provide concrete proposals to the Council on how to solve some of the difficulties discussed, as for example in the area of joint programming. The delegation invited both UNFPA and UNDP to comment on how the development of joint proposals could promote fruitful discussions in the Council on such issues. One delegation asked how difficulties in the area of data collection could be overcome. The same delegation asked whether coordinated reviews would replace the review by individual countries.

24. One delegation suggested that the major funds and programmes initiate a discussion on the pros and cons of sending UNDAFs to their respective executive boards as the frame of reference for individual country programmes and subsequent collaborative programming. The delegation supported the recommendation that the Council urge that there be as much complementarity as possible between the UNDAF and other coordination instruments such as the World Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) and the consolidated appeals process. He added that the CCA should be prepared in such a manner that it provide a broad situation analysis for such instruments. With regard to collaboration between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions, the delegation wondered about the extent to which words were being translated into action. He saw the need for further clarification regarding the respective roles and division of labour in the area of aid coordination and resource mobilization, in both normal and special development situations. The delegation asked for additional information on the results of the Fund's collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the issue of integrating population and environment issues in planning and decision-making.

25. Another delegation underscored the need to harmonize programme cycles with national plans and emphasized the need to develop common data systems and indicators. Two other delegations noted that special attention had to be paid to the sustainability of harmonization measures and encouraged countries that hosted United Nations organizations to make specific arrangements to establish United Nations houses.

26. One delegation, while noting that it was pleased at the progress achieved by UNDAF and UNDG, noted that many issues remained to be tackled and cooperation would need to increase. Underscoring the importance of the issue of improved cooperation, the delegation requested an assessment of how the cooperation was working on the ground. Another delegation, while noting that it was satisfied with the emphasis on the involvement of the entire United Nations system in UNDG activities, stated that further streamlining was needed. One delegation regretted the

slow progress in achieving complementarity between UNDAF and CDF and noted that this would impact the use of limited resources at country level. The delegation commended UNFPA support for reproductive health in emergency and crisis situations.

27. With regard to the review of the gender focal point-function in the United Nations system, one delegation requested a clarification on the UNFPA role as Task Manager in the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (IACWGE). Concerning common premises, the same delegation fully agreed with involving appropriate external technical experts at the country level, including real-estate professionals, architects and engineers, together with designated project management.

28. One delegation stated that the Economic and Social Council was an appropriate body to address the issue of ending the United Nations pledging conferences. Another delegation noted that having a pledging conference had not raised money and suggested more "directive" language recommending discontinuing the pledging conferences. One delegation advised caution with regard to the matter of eliminating the United Nations pledging conferences and stated that the subject should be debated by the Council and the General Assembly and not the Executive Board. Another delegation pointed out that the future of pledging conferences was beyond the mandate of the Executive Board.

29. One delegation requested further elaboration on the appraisal system for resident coordinators. The delegation also requested timelines for the implementation of the multi-year funding framework (MYFF). With regard to gender balance within UNFPA, the delegation was pleased to note that UNFPA had emphasized recruitment of women for professional positions and, as a result, 50 per cent of all professional posts in the Fund were occupied by women. The delegation urged UNFPA to build on that success. The delegation also underscored the achievements of the ICPD+5 review and stressed the need to implement the key actions, as well as to monitor the implementation. Another delegation underscored the noteworthy gender balance achieved by the Fund and stated that it was a concrete response to the International Conference on Population and Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and other global conferences. The delegation also stressed the importance of geographical balance.

30. Regarding the responsibilities of Member States to link the approval of country programmes by the Executive Board to financial contributions to those country programmes, one delegation, speaking also on behalf of another delegation, stated that it favoured such a link. Another delegation, referring to paragraph 15 (e) of the report concerning the call to donor countries to take the necessary steps to reverse the current decline in overall official development assistance (ODA), stated that it had reservations about importing the General Assembly debate into the Executive Board and vice versa. While noting that the Executive Board should work on reversing the trend in declining resources for UNFPA and UNDP, the delegation observed that the overall trend in ODA was a matter for the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

31. Referring to paragraph 19, one delegation stated that UNFPA should be explicit regarding the shortcomings of the current process for identifying candidates for the pool of resident coordinators. Noting that the selection process was important, he observed that before recommending changes the cost/benefit should be analysed. With regard to the issue of increasing the number of women candidates, the delegation stated there should be career development for women compatible with their other obligations. The delegation expressed concern regarding external recruitment and underscored that to be a good resident coordinator, in-depth knowledge of the United Nations system was essential.

32. One delegation asked which countries were involved in the initiatives mentioned in paragraph 52. Referring to paragraph 54, the same delegation underscored the need to consult with Governments regarding the development of indicators.

33. Specific revisions to the text in certain paragraphs were suggested by two delegations as follows: in paragraph 21 (b) after the word "gender" add "and geographical"; in line eight of paragraph 22, after the word "partners" add "and governments"; in paragraph 31, replace the word "ability" with "right and the creation of services"; in line four of paragraph 33, after the word "information" add "; adolescent mothers should also be allowed to continue their studies"; and in paragraph 44 (b) the text should read "Encourage Governments to involve civil society in capacity-building;".

34. One delegation stated that it did not support the recommendations in paragraphs 27 (d) and 53-55 of the report.

Response by the Executive Director

35. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for their positive comments and useful suggestions. She was pleased that the Executive Board had recognized the effort invested in preparing the report. Concerning the resident coordinator system, she noted that it was open to everybody; however, the selection process was costly. Also, two female UNFPA staff had successfully completed the competency exercise but had not been placed in resident coordinator positions. She noted that a lack of gender balance in the system remained an issue. She stated that UNFPA had several excellent female staff, including some at the P-4 level, who could be prepared for resident coordinator positions for the future. With regard to the resident coordinator assessment process, she stated that staff matters were a sensitive issue and could not be discussed very frankly. On the subject of joint programming, she noted that there were some good examples of it; however, some agencies did not allow the allocation of funds to others. Nevertheless, UNFPA had undertaken joint programmes in the areas of HIV/AIDS and education. Concerning joint reporting to the Economic and Social Council, she stated that it could be done easily as long as there was an open process and the concerns and issues of each agency were taken up.

36. She stated that with regard to a joint set of financial rules and regulations for UNFPA and UNDP, the two organizations would look at the issue and she had already written to the Administrator on that matter. With reference to the United Nations pledging conferences, she observed that very few pledges were made for UNFPA at those conferences. Regarding the comment on ODA, she noted that there was a connection between ODA in general and the trends in the funds and programmes. Regarding the Fund's role as Task Manager in IACWGE, she observed that a survey of gender focal points had been undertaken. One key finding had been the discrepancy between the job descriptions for gender focal points and the actual work they performed. One follow-up action had been to examine the budget process and UNFPA was one of the organizations selected for a study being carried out by the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat.

37. The Executive Director noted that at the country level most United Nations system agencies participated in the CCA and UNDAF; however, at the global level more effort was needed to have those agencies participate in UNDG. In particular, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) should join UNDG as they had a lot to offer, and UNFPA and other organizations already worked extensively with them. With regard to collaboration with the World Bank, she noted that that was ongoing. For example, UNFPA was also working with the World Bank on the Paris 21 initiative. She stated that additional resources should be mobilized to strengthen database systems in programme countries. She added that a collaborative effort by the United Nations system, the World Bank, bilateral agencies and the European Union was needed towards that end.

38. Regarding simplification of procedures, she stated that the Fund always endeavoured not to increase the burden on UNFPA country offices and national counterparts. She observed that as good CCAs and UNDAFs became available, the Fund would be able to drop some of its own programming procedures and thereby also reduce the burden on countries. The Executive Director concluded by noting that she was just about to attend a press conference to announce a generous grant of $57 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support adolescent reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS prevention, in four countries in Africa. She added that such support indicated that the Fund's scenario 2 in the MYFF was not overly optimistic.

Response by the Deputy Executive Director (Programme)

39. The Deputy Executive Director (Programme) thanked the delegations for their positive, constructive comments, including the favourable comments on the analytical quality of the report. She noted that UNDG had been stressing harmonization of programmes and procedures and Governments would indeed play a strong role in the process. As an example, she noted that there was a proposal for joint procedures for medium-term reviews, which would, of course, be undertaken with the full involvement of the

Government and under its leadership. She observed that in the interest of time, UNFPA would respond bilaterally to some of the more detailed issues that had been raised.